

# Florida Legislature convenes special session focused on illegal immigration

Bryan Griffin,  
Director of Communications,  
Governor Ron DeSantis  
TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—

Please see below a statement from the governor on the proclamation calling for a special session of the Florida Legislature on illegal immigration enforcement to convene this week.

“Florida always leads. We have a responsibility to enact policies that will help end the illegal immigration crisis once and for all, and our Republican leaders have

been working tirelessly to do just that,” said Governor Ron DeSantis.

“The bills to be considered this week in special session take ideas from the various proposals and brings them together to enact the strongest legislation to enhance interior enforcement and to combat illegal immigration amongst the fifty states.

The proposed legislation requires the full participation of state and local law enforcement with the Federal government in its enforcement of immigration law, prevents the ‘catch and release’ of illegal

aliens, and ensures that illegal aliens who enter Florida are held accountable. It also provides significant resources to bolster these efforts.

I want to thank the Florida Legislature for convening in special session on this important topic. In working together on this bill, Senate President Ben Albritton and Speaker Danny Perez have been great partners, and we have produced an aggressive bill that we can stand fully behind.

I thank the members of the Florida House and Senate for delivering on be-

half of the people who sent us here. I also thank Agricultural Commissioner Wilton Simpson for his support of this revised product to help combat illegal immigration.

With the enactment of these policies, Florida will help the Trump Administration to deliver on the President’s historic mandate to end illegal immigration. This is a big win for the people of Florida and demonstrates that we will continue to lead.”

## CITY OF APOPKA PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE SMALL-SCALE FUTURE LAND USE AMENDMENT AND CHANGE OF ZONING

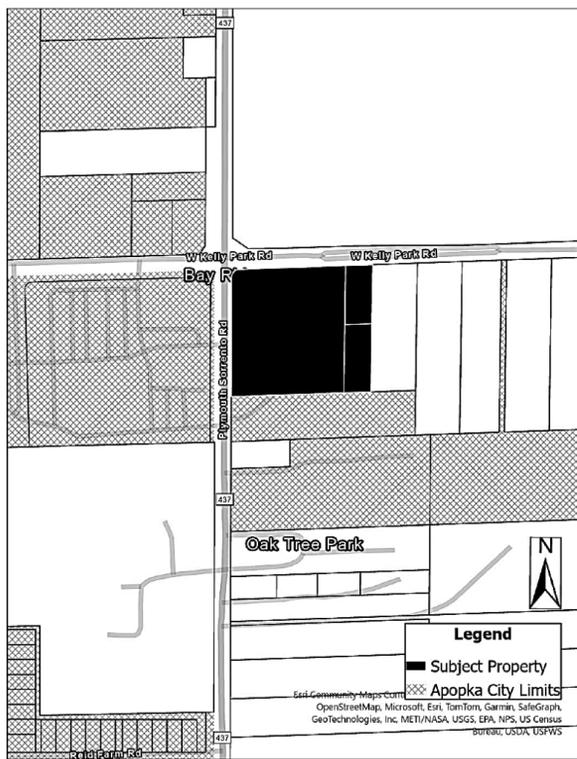
NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Secs. 163.3184 and 166.041(3)(a), Florida Statutes and the Apopka Code of Ordinances, Part III, Land Development Code, Article II, Section 2.4.7.B, that **Nathan Milch** has made application, on behalf of the property owner, relating to the following described property.

### ORDINANCE NO. 3095

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF APOPKA, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT OF THE APOPKA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF THE CITY OF APOPKA; CHANGING THE FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION FROM RESIDENTIAL VERY LOW SUBURBAN TO MIXED-USE FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY OWNED BY ADVENTIST HEALTH SYSTEM/SUNBELT, INC.; GENERALLY LOCATED ON THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF KELLY PARK ROAD AND PLYMOUTH SORRENTO ROAD; COMPRISING 5.56 ACRES, MORE OR LESS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

### ORDINANCE NO. 3096

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF APOPKA, FLORIDA, CHANGING THE ZONING FROM T (TRANSITION) TO KPI-MU (KELLY PARK INTERCHANGE - MIXED-USE) FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY OWNED BY ADVENTIST HEALTH SYSTEM/SUNBELT, INC.; GENERALLY LOCATED ON THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF KELLY PARK ROAD AND PLYMOUTH SORRENTO ROAD; COMPRISING 5.56 ACRES, MORE OR LESS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.



Parcel Identification Number(s): 18-20-28-0000-00-101, 18-20-28-0000-00-107 and 18-20-28-0000-00-120  
Contains: 5.56 +/- Acres

NOTICE is given that a public hearing for Ordinance Numbers 3095 and 3096 will be held by the **City of Apopka City Council** at its regularly scheduled meeting in the City Council Chambers of the Apopka City Hall, 120 E. Main Street, Apopka, Florida on **Wednesday, March 5, 2025 at 1:30 P.M. and Wednesday, March 19, 2025 at 7:00 P.M.**

Affected parties and the public may appear at the above listed hearings to speak. The proposed Future Land Use and Rezoning Applications can be inspected at the Apopka Community Development Department located at Apopka City Hall on weekdays between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 4:30 P.M. City Hall address shown below. Please be advised that, under State law, if you decide to appeal a decision made with respect to this matter, you will need a record of the proceedings and may need to ensure that a verbatim record is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), persons with disabilities needing assistance to participate in any of these proceedings should contact the City Clerk’s Office at 120 East Main Street, Apopka, FL 32703, Telephone: 407-703-1704, no less than 48 hours prior to the proceeding.

Apopka City Council  
Apopka Planning Commission  
Community Development Department

February 14, 2025  
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## Letter: Smart growth is needed

Continued from page 2A

county in Florida, we must work in a TRUE JOINT EFFORT with Orange County Public Schools and Orange County to appeal to the State of Florida to address the City of Apopka’s and Orange County’s school overcrowding.

Orange County Public Schools is the fourth largest school district in Florida and yet Orange County Public School children “enjoy” the most portable

classrooms. You must add the three largest school districts’ number of portable classrooms to barely outnumber Orange County’s. Portable classrooms are NOT AS SAFE and they cost more to heat, cool and maintain.

Apopka children continue to suffer with school overcrowding today. The fact that Apopka children attending Wolf Lake Middle and Elementary Schools endured 16 years of overcrowding from

2006-2022, until the Kelly Park K-8 opened in 2022 is disgraceful.

As we work through this moratorium, we should amend our Charter to ensure SMART FUTURE GROWTH. We MUST get in front of our growth. The burden of services needed to support a developer’s project should fall to the developer.

NOW is the time to act.

Rod Olsen  
Apopka

## Moore: Trails need creative options

Continued from page 2A

dia. Everyone should seek to find ways to contribute in more meaningful and positive ways.

Neighborhood Leaders regularly pick up trash and trim up trees. Many have come out to paint murals, fix fencing, improve entranceways, or erect fence art. They are committed to making their community safer. Others have been inspired to create “third places” replete with gardens, resting places, and artistic pallet furniture. This is just a sample of neighborhood leaders who are already contributing. However, I believe we can do even more.

The author describes the “City as a Living Work of Art.” He delves into concepts which might appeal to your interests: recycling and greening, renewing leadership capacities, reconceiving a city, remapping a city, reigniting a passion for learning, revaluing and reinvesting in people and home-grown talent, repairing health through the built environment, and reversing decline (blight).

Creativity implies applying new and fresh ideas to every aspect of a community. Creativity can be applied to the challenge of

solving homelessness, environmental preservation, better parks and recreation, improved social climate, and myriad other things.

I’ll share one of my ideas about Dream Lake. The ideas came after producing a laminated key to the Dream Lake mural at Dream Lake Elementary School. I couldn’t have written the mural key without the help of Janice Blackwelder and Jennifer Ryan. Their stories of life on Dream Lake inspired me to dream about building a dock and boardwalk along the shoreline. Additionally, I thought about constructing a large pavilion with available rentals for school use during the day and reunions and birthday parties on the weekend. It is invigorating to dream about creating better spaces in District 2.

Another concept the author explores in his book is how democracy can be renewed. Too often, citizens are content to sit back and rely on a handful of elected officials. I believe all citizens have creative ideas about how our cities could grow and thrive. I want everyone to be empowered. Local government should foster opportunities for citizen’s ideas to be put into action.

District 2 will soon have three new trails – the Pine Hills Trail, Lake Apopka Loop Trail, and Coast-2-Coast Trail. It is time for citizens to brainstorm about creating great spaces along these trails. I’m not content to let Winter Garden and Oakland be the only creative trail towns. I will need the help of residents in these communities to collaborate with Orange County Parks & Recreation.

Lastly, I must recognize Ella Duke and the Downtown Barbers. On a regular basis, their creativity is reinvigorating the 5th Street area in Downtown Apopka. People now want to bike to 5th Street as a destination. Recently, Caitlyn Kasheta and Main Street Apopka offered a Walk with Mom Event on the West Orange Trail to 5th Street.

Thus, I believe strongly that community and mass creativity must be developed. While local government should operate a few structures for safety and better organization, we should just let people go create. I encourage you to read Charles Landry’s seminal work entitled *The Art of City Making*. He will certainly stimulate ideas and creativity.

## Hayden: Earn answers to your dreams

Continued from page 2A

the mother, and wife, who, after working an outside job, comes home to fix supper, get laundry started, clean the house, help with the kid’s homework, and after all that, loves on her husband to make him feel important, and necessary!

She also deserves the kind of satisfaction and peace of knowing that she is the one gear that makes

the machine run smoothly and makes the dream and wishes possible!

What is your wish? What are you willing to sacrifice for it? Remember, if it doesn’t hurt, it is not a sacrifice!

There is no American Dream without your part of giving.

Too many people today think they deserve all their dreams and wishes fulfilled, without the work

involved, because of equity.

Equity is not equality. Equity is getting the prize for first place, even if you finished last, just because you entered the race.

Just because you are a part of the human race doesn’t mean you get your wishes or dreams granted; it means you have the opportunity to EARN them, just like everyone else, (That’s equality)!

## ALL ABOUT APOPKA

### The Apopka Chief

Established 1923  
(USPS 545-440)

The Apopka Chief is published every Friday and entered as Periodicals, postage paid at Apopka Post Office, under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879. The Apopka Chief newspaper is published by Foliage Enterprises, Inc., every Friday at 400 North Park Avenue, Apopka, Fla., 32712-3417. An annual subscription is \$25 in Orange County and \$30 outside Orange County. Phone 407-886-2777. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Apopka Chief, P.O. Box 880, Apopka, Fla., 32704-0880.

The Apopka Chief is a consistent award-winning community weekly newspaper and a member of the Florida Press Association. The newspaper won the group’s award as its best newspaper in 1982, 1987, and 1988, the only three-time winner. Letters to the editor are welcome, but must be signed and include a daytime telephone number, address, or email address for verification. Management reserves the right to edit letters.

www.theapokchief.com, news@theapokchief.com



#### City of Apopka Telephone Numbers

City Hall	407-703-1700
Mayor’s Office	407-703-1701
City Administrator	407-703-1649
City Clerk	407-703-1704
Community Devel.	407-703-1712
Code Enforcement	407-703-1738
Finance Dept.	407-703-1725
Fire (non-emerg.)	407-703-1756
Parks and Rec. Dept.	407-703-1741
Police Chief	407-703-1769
Police (non-emerg.)	407-703-1771
Job Line	407-703-1743
Solid Waste Collect.	407-703-1731
Street Maintenance	407-703-1731
Utility Billing	407-703-1727
Medical, fire emergency	911
The city of Apopka was chartered in 1882. It is located at 28°30 north latitude and is 150 feet above sea level. Its population is about 48,000 and its total area is more than 30 sq. mi. <a href="http://www.apopka.net">www.apopka.net</a>	

#### Orange County Telephone Numbers

Animal Services	407-836-3111
Auto/Boat Tags	850-617-2000
Building Dept.	407-836-8550
County Mayor	407-836-7370
County Commission	407-836-7350
County Attorney	407-836-7320
Clerk of the Court	407-836-2065
Elections Supervisor	407-836-2070
Fire/Rescue	407-836-3111
Solid Waste	407-836-6601
Garbage Collection	407-703-1731
Health Dept.	407-836-2600
Hunting/Fishing Lic	888-347-4356
Parks and Rec. Dept.	407-836-6200
Property Appraiser	407-836-5044
Sheriff Administrative	407-254-7000
Non-Emerg. Complaint	407-836-4357
Utilities	407-836-5515
All other departments	407-836-3111
Medical, fire emergency	911
<a href="http://www.orangecountyfl.net">www.orangecountyfl.net</a>	

#### Other Area Numbers of Note

<b>U.S. Senators</b>	
Rick Scott (Rep.)	202-224-5274
Marco Rubio (Rep.)	407-254-2573
<b>U.S. Representative</b>	
Daniel Webster (Dist. 11)	352-241-9220
<b>State Representatives</b>	
Doug Bankson	407-476-6787
Carolina Amesty (Dist. 45)	unknown
<b>State Senators</b>	
Geraldine Thompson (Dist.11)	407-297-2045
<b>Orange County Commissioner</b>	
Christine Moore	407-836-7350
<b>Orange County Public Schools</b>	
Pupil assignment	407-317-3233
Bus routes	407-317-3800
Superintendent	407-317-3200
School Board	407-317-3200
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
The Apopka Chief	407-886-2777
Museum of the Apopkans	407-703-1707
Chamber of Commerce	407-886-1441

# Pond: Complete plugging of sinkhole finished in Sept. 2024

Continued from page 1A

signed as a step-down terrace, with ground elevation the highest in the north and lowest in the south. There are two separate ponds located side by side within the reclaimed pond perimeter. The smaller one holds about 50 million gallons of water, while the large one holds 200 million gallons.

In November 2023, the pond's water elevation reached an all-time high through a combination of rainwater and reclaimed water. In the northern section, the water level reached a depth of 22 feet deep, while it was over 30 feet deep in the southern section, according to Huo. This led to the January 5,

2024, sinkhole in the northern part, which was first discovered when soil erosion appeared in an infrared satellite image. On January 24, 2024, the city noticed the erosion line with a visual inspection; on January 30, 2024, the incident was reported to the state Department of Environmental Protection.

A local geotechnical engineering firm investigated the sinkhole between January and June of 2024.

Construction work for phase one of sinkhole repair took place between July and September 2024, with completion in September. Phase one involved only the plugging of the sinkhole itself. The pond is currently not operational.

After the sinkhole developed, consultants under the city of Apopka's direction conducted water quality tests at three residential drinking walls in the pond's area.

The tests took place on May 15, 2024, and the results came back one week later showing no impact to the aquifer.

To plug the sinkhole, larger rear props were placed on the bottom to give more stability; smaller rocks laid on top of this layer to give more density, and at the top of this, a layer of compacted clays was laid to prevent water from seeping through.

Following this construction, crews added a layer of concrete to the very

top for stability.

The city is currently reviewing a contractor's proposal to investigate liners in both ponds for potential improper material and/or installations.

Discussion between city staff and City Council occurred after Huo's presentation.

## Restoration plan

In order to restore the Golden Gem reclaimed water pond's functionality, Huo laid out a restoration plan.

The first step is to do a complete subsurface geophysical examination of the pond using technology; this scan will help the city know what to do about restoring the pond.

The second step is to remove existing membrane and install compacted clay as the pond's bottom. The membrane/liner essentially serves the same purpose as compacted clay, but clay lasts much longer. Whereas the membrane could last between 20 to 40 years, the clay bottom could last a lifetime.

"Also, by using clay, you can build up the bottom elevation of the pond and give more separation from the pond bottom to the groundwater, which is one of the main causes of the (sinkhole) accident," Huo said.

The third step is to close off the northern cell completely by building a clay dam. City consultants

informed the city that "the most worrisome area" is the northern section because that was where the sinkhole had formed, Huo said.

The fourth step is to incorporate a water circulation plan into the design that would include fountains and pumping systems to keep the pond's water from becoming stationary. Stagnant water in a reclaimed water pond as large as Golden Gem could lead to a degradation of water quality over time, according to Huo. Design of the water circulation plan would have to be outsourced as opposed to being done in house, Huo said.

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# Flood: Responsible organizations must agree

Continued from page 1A

tablished in time for this year's Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to Nov. 30. Yet, he said the short-term solution Orange County District 2 Commissioner Christine Moore presented at the Feb. 5 City Council meeting "seems pretty complicated."

Moore will present the short-term solution in further detail at the Wednesday, Feb. 19, City Council

meeting. She is proposing to pump water from Border Lake to the drainage well at Lake Page. Since the drainage well is - what Nelson described as - a draw from the surface water down to the aquifer, untreated water will go into the aquifer.

"Limiting water going into a drainage well is DEP's number one priority. Obviously at the point where flooding becomes an issue they might overlook it, but drainage wells are not DEP's preferred solution to flooding," Nelson said.

Posing as a severe problem since 2017, the Border Lake post-storm

flooding issue was front-and-center again in October 2024 when the S.R. 436/Piedmont-Wekiwa Road area was underwater, including the Piedmont Plaza parking lot, due to Hurricane Milton. The nearby Wekiva Village community needed the installation of a tiger dam - water-filled bladders created to be barriers - to prevent the loss of residential units, and the flooding impacted residents living along Lake Cortez for weeks.

According to Moore in a statement last week, the city's long-term flooding mitigation solution could take three to five years to

execute.

Border Lake is a closed-drainage basin with impacts from S.R. 436, Seminole County, Orange County, and the city of Apopka. The Border Lake watershed responsibilities include the city of Apopka at 45 percent, Seminole County at 35 percent, the Florida Department of Transportation at 19 percent, and Orange County at one percent. Orange County is committed to providing funding for 25 percent of the costs to end this flooding problem. The lakes are located in the city of Apopka's jurisdiction, Moore said.

Prior to the late 1990s widening of S.R. 436, there was a drain well located near S.R. 436 and Lake Ruden. The state DEP has not allowed replacement, according to Moore.

For the past 20 years, the area has received significant summer rains and hurricane impacts, and thus, the lake has continued to rise. In fact, Border Lake is 3-4 feet higher now than at the same time in 2024, Moore said in her statement.

Since the fall 2024 hurricane impacts, Moore has worked with Orange County Public Works staff to research a short-term pumping operation through the Piedmont chain of lakes and under Piedmont Wekiva Road to the Lake Page drain well. The county staff has developed a study and a preliminary cost analysis for the project.

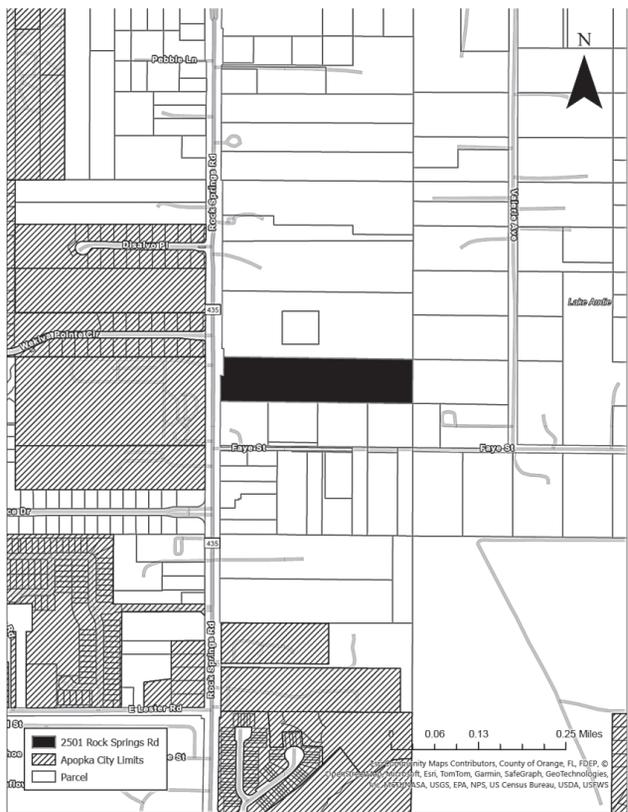
The city has no evacuation plan for residents who live in the S.R. 436/Piedmont-Wekiwa Road area, especially the residents who live near Lake Cortez and in the Wekiva Village community.

## PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE ANNEXATION CITY OF APOPKA

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Florida Statutes 171.044, the Apopka Code of Ordinances, Part III, Land Development Code, Article II, Section 2.5.1.A, that Elisabeth Crane has made an application to the City of Apopka City Council for an **ANNEXATION** of a property located at 2501 Rock Springs Road. This application relates to the following described property:

ORDINANCE NO. 3094

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF APOPKA, FLORIDA, TO EXTEND ITS TERRITORIAL AND MUNICIPAL LIMITS TO ANNEX PURSUANT TO FLORIDA STATUTE 171.044 THE HEREINAFTER DESCRIBED LANDS SITUATED AND BEING IN ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA, OWNED BY BDT IRREVOCABLE INCOME ONLY TRUST; LOCATED AT 2501 ROCK SPRINGS ROAD, COMPRISING 9.63 ACRES, MORE OR LESS; PROVIDING FOR DIRECTIONS TO THE CITY CLERK, SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.



Parcel Identification Number(s): 27-20-28-0000-00-072  
Contains: 9.63 +/- acres

NOTICE is given that public hearings for Ordinance No. 3094 will be held by the City of Apopka City Council at its regularly scheduled meetings in the City Council Chambers of the Apopka City Hall, 120 E. Main Street, Apopka, Florida on **Wednesday, March 5, 2025 beginning at 1:30 P.M. AND Wednesday, March 19, 2025 at 7:00 P.M.**

Affected parties and the public may appear at the above listed hearings to speak. The proposed Annexation can be inspected at the Apopka Community Development Department located at Apopka City Hall on weekdays between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. City Hall address shown below. Please be advised that, under State law, if you decide to appeal a decision made with respect to this matter, you will need a record of the proceedings and may need to ensure that a verbatim record is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), persons with disabilities needing assistance to participate in any of these proceedings should contact the City Clerk's Office at 120 East Main Street, Apopka FL 32703, Telephone: 407-703-1704, no less than 48 hours prior to the proceeding.

Apopka City Council  
Apopka Planning Commission  
Community Development Department

February 14, 2025

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